

Minutes of a Meeting of the Community Resources Committee held in The New Millennium Chamber, Manor House, Church Street, BN17 5EW on Thursday 4 September 2025 at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Tandy – Chair
Councillor Lee – Vice Chair
Councillor Daws*
Councillor Tilbrook*
Councillor Wiltshire

In attendance:

Juliet Harris – Assistant Town Clerk
Felix Gillett – Community Resources Officer

2025 to 2025

11. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

12. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media, and Mobile Phones.

The procedures were noted.

13. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillors Blanchard-Cooper and O'Neill.

14. Declaration of Interest

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and/or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the agenda. The standing declarations were noted, and Councillor Tilbrook declared a prejudicial and pecuniary interest in agenda item 8.4, Allotment Working Group Recommendations, as his daughter was an allotment holder. He confirmed that he would leave the meeting for this discussion.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2025, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the chair.

16. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

The chair reported that the summer programme of events had been very successful and well attended and encouraged members to attend what would be an action-packed Town Show and Family Fun Day being hosted at Rosemead Park on Saturday 13 September.

17. Public Forum

There were six members of the public present and no written representations made.

17.1 Biodiversity Policy

The Committee heard from a member of the public who raised questions regarding the council's biodiversity policy. Referring to the removal of a tree at one of the council's allotment sites, they expressed the view that this action had been unnecessary and potentially inconsistent with the council's own policy. They asked how similar situations could be avoided in the future. They also suggested that, as part of the policy review scheduled for November 2025, the council consider establishing an environmental group—like that in place at Arun District Council—and enquired whether the Allotment Working Group might include this on a future agenda.

In response, the Assistant Town Clerk explained that the council always sought to retain trees where they were healthy. Regarding the forthcoming biodiversity policy review, it was noted that the key focus for the Town Council was on implementing changes in work practices and site management to enhance biodiversity. Members of the Allotment Working Group were encouraged to submit ideas for potential improvements to the Chair of the group for consideration as future agenda items.

17.2 Allotment Repossession Process

The Committee heard from a site representative who raised concerns about the repossession process for allotment plots not meeting cultivation standards. They expressed frustration at the lack of follow-up despite reports made to the Council.

In response, the Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that a process was in place, though resource constraints had caused delays. She expressed appreciation for the support provided by site representatives and advised that steps were being taken to address the backlog.

18. Officer's Reports

18.1. Standing Orders / Urgent Actions

The committee received and noted two urgent actions, previously circulated, which detailed the decisions to replace the gates and fencing at the southern entrance to Rosemead Park and reinforce the northern boundary with logs.

It was Resolved that:

The urgent actions be noted.

18.2. Community Resources Officer Periodic Report

- 18.2.1. Members received a report, previously circulated, which outlined the progress of key projects and initiatives led by the Community Resources Officer (CRO), covering grant funding, sports development, works at Rosemead Park, and plans for the annual review of the youth services contract ahead of the 2026 review. In addition, the Committee was also asked to extend the council's floral contract for a further year to allow a full evaluation of future delivery models.
- 18.2.2. The CRO reported that work during the summer was focussed on strengthening the boundaries at Rosemead Park following the unauthorised encampment earlier in the year, supporting the Sports Forum to deliver the new Sports Funding Programme and delivering the 2025 Grant Aid Scheme. Delivering the improvements at Rosemead Park had shown a broad range of options to enhance biodiversity including new horticultural practises and introduced the council to new contractors and ideas. This was timely as the council was due to review its floral contract and at the same time had highlighted how the floral contract could be developed to better meet the council's business plan objectives.
- 18.2.3. The existing floral contract covered a range of town-wide seasonal planting. This included highways and Manor House planting. It was considered that these could be separated out and at the same time facilitate the introduction of biodiversity-based methods and explore volunteer involvement in line with the Council's goals. It was therefore recommended that the existing contract be extended for a further year to allow time for a full evaluation of the contract, draft the specification, launch the new tender in summer 2026 leading to the appointment of a contractor to start in spring 2027. Acknowledging the new timeline, this was considered sensible.

The Committee resolved:

- 1. To receive the Sports Forum notes from the meeting held on 7 July 2025.
- 2. To extend the existing floral contract for a further year as set out in Section 7 of the report alongside an agreed timetable providing scope for the floral contract service review in 2026.
- 3. Otherwise note the contents of the report.

18.3. Service Funding Agreements Review

- 18.3.1. The Community Resources Officer presented a report, previously circulated, which proposed the adoption of a formal Policy and Procedure to govern future Service Funding Agreements (SFAs). He explained that the implementation of the tiered grant system over the last two years had identified more clearly organisations that could be future partners who shared the Council's business plan aspirations. It had also highlighted that the current Freedom Leisure SFA could be more effectively linked to the Town Council's events programme enabling a strong partnership which might be better framed in a new Service Level Agreement.
- 18.3.2. At the same time, it was recognised that there may still be organisations that had not necessarily been awarded grants but were also potential partners whose work was considered vital to the community. Therefore, the policy had been drafted with a timeline and application process that included the formation of a panel through a Task and Finish Group, to evaluate applications.
- 18.3.3. If approved the process would see applications opened in September 2025 to both existing providers and new organisations, including Tier Three Grant recipients. Following this the Grant Aid Panel would shortlist applications and the Task and Finish Group carry out interviews with the shortlisted applicants to make final recommendations on potential new agreements in the autumn. These recommendations would come forward to the Committee as part of the budget setting process. This would enable the new SFAs to commence on 1 April 2026.

*Councillor Daws left the meeting at 6.53pm.

- 18.3.4. The Committee was supportive of the Policy and Procedure and recognising that member participation in the process was vital considered that the Group Leaders should be asked to nominate representatives for the Task and Finish Group with authority being delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the chair of the committee to confirm the appointments. It was therefore resolved that:
1. The Service Funding Agreement Policy and Procedure, be approved and the time frame noted.
 2. The Group Leaders be asked to nominate representatives for the Task and Finish Group and authority be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the chair of the committee to confirm the appointments.

18.4. Allotments Working Group Recommendations

*Councillor Tilbrook redeclared his prejudicial and pecuniary interest in the following matter and left the meeting at 6.57pm.

- 18.4.1. The Committee had before it a report which set out the recommendations of the Allotments Working Group which had met on 14 August. The August meeting was particularly productive, with discussions centred on improving tenancy processes, maintaining site standards, and supporting the Town Council in delivering the objectives of the Allotment Strategy.
- 18.4.2. The recommendations included a 5% fee increase to £10.88 per rod from 2027, new deposit requirements and waiting list fees, and charges for neglected plots. Policy changes were also proposed, offering a rent-free period for tenants taking on neglected plots and allowing repossessed plots to be reallocated to existing tenants. To assist them the committee also had the notes of the meeting and the detailed proposals that had been discussed by the Working Group, both previously circulated. It was noted that research with neighbouring parishes and independently run allotments, by both the Community Resources Officer and the site representatives had contributed to the discussion.
- 18.4.3. The Committee proceeded to consider the proposals in more detail and the discussion focussed on affordability, particularly for new tenants, including concessions, how they sat with the Allotments Strategy and the timeframe for implementation. It was noted that if approved, the fees and charges came into effect in January 2027 and that all tenants would therefore have a year's notice. Any changes would also be aligned with the Town Council's move to a new accounting system which was underway. Equally, the increased income would not be evident until 2027 to 2028 and it was therefore difficult to predict the impact this would have on the Town council's strategic objective to reduce the gap between income and expenditure. On a practical level it was considered that the proposal to increase the level of plot deposit be set at £20 per rod and that the fee for neglected plots should not be taken forward.
- 18.4.4. Turning to the proposals to allow a three-month rent-free period for tenants who take on derelict plots requiring clearance and to reallocate repossessed plots to existing allotment tenants where they are adjacent to their current plot. It was noted that on the rare occasions when these situations arose, this was the current practice and one which was considered practical to retain. Overall, the committee welcomed the constructive engagement within the Working Group and considered that most of the proposals would help to strengthen commitment from tenants and encourage better cultivation which in turn would improve the overall manageability of the allotment sites.

The Committee therefore resolved:

1. That the plot rental fees be increased by 5% to £10.88p per rod with effect from 1 January 2027.
2. That the following fees be introduced with effect from 1 January 2027:
 - Deposit fees be changed to £20 per rod

- A one-off deposit fee of £25 is introduced for joining the Waiting List
3. To endorse the continuation of the following policies relating to plot allocation:
 - A three-month rent-free period for tenants who take on derelict plots requiring clearance.
 - Reallocating repossessed plots to existing allotment tenants where they are adjacent to their current plot.
 4. To receive the Allotments Working Group notes from the meetings held on 29 May and 14 August 2025.

*Councillor Tilbrook rejoined the meeting at 19.24pm.

18.5. Events Periodic Report

- 18.5.2. The committee received a report, previously circulated, outlining feedback from the Council's summer events programme, as well as plans for the upcoming Town Show, Family Fun Day, and the Remembrance Sunday service in November. The Committee wished to formally record its thanks to Council staff for their dedication and hard work in delivering a highly successful summer events programme.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

18.6. Events Forum Update

- 18.6.2. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, with an update on work of the Forum. It was noted that the Forum continued to evolve as a valuable platform for collaboration between local groups who wished to share ideas and identify opportunities to develop the Towns' events calendar. Discussions were positive and several initiatives were being explored. Although the Forum was not yet able to deliver events independently, there was a clear enthusiasm and commitment among its members to drive a coordinated, town-wide programme in the future. Officers would therefore continue to support this progress by scheduling regular meetings and establishing the new Love Littlehampton website.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

18.7 Christmas Illuminations

18.7.1. The Committee received a report, previously circulated, providing an update on the 2025 Christmas Lights scheme and progress on the 2026–2028 tender. The report also included proposals to introduce additional lighting in Duke Street and an update on an initiative to install permanent festoon lighting in the High Street. Feedback on the 2025 scheme had been positive overall, though additional lighting needs were identified in Duke Street and East Street. It was therefore proposed that this year's scheme be expanded to install lights in three trees on Duke Street, with an estimated cost of £600 to be met from reserves.

18.7.2. Arun District Council had also secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for festoon lighting in the High Street, with installation anticipated in early 2026. This initiative had underlined the need for infrastructure repairs and investment to support future lighting schemes. Looking ahead, options under consideration included introducing permanent winter lighting in Duke Street and enhancing the decorations in East Street. These would be explored in the forthcoming tender process. The Committee supported the recommendations.

The Committee therefore resolved:

1. That the proposal to extend the 2025 scheme to include lighting in Duke Street as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report with an additional cost of £600 to be met from Earmarked Reserves be approved.
2. That the additional lighting proposals as outlined in paragraphs 4.2. and 4.3. of the report be explored as part of the tender review process which was scheduled to start in winter.
3. To receive the Christmas Lights Working Group notes from the meeting held on 13 August 2025.

18.8 Museum Periodic Report

18.8.1. The Committee had before it a report, previously circulated, which contained updates on recent activities and engagements with the museum, including proposals for the acquisition of a small number of items. Recent activities included several successful exhibitions with Tales from the Time Machine proving popular. In addition, the Team continued to support the Town Council's events programme and had drawn strong visitor numbers. Work continued updating policies, progressing documentation and drafting the HLF grant application. The Committee was also asked to note the position regarding the security and insurance requirements relating to the six Iron Age coins currently on loan from the British Museum.

It was resolved that:

1. The recommended acquisition of items detailed in Appendix A, attached to the report be approved.

2. The position regarding the Six Iron Age coins on loan from the British Museum, as set out in paragraph 3.7. in the report be noted.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

18.9. Quarterly Business Plan Progress Report

- 18.9.1. The Committee considered a report, previously circulated, providing an update on progress towards the business plan goals. Over the past quarter, the Council had delivered a successful summer events programme, started the Service Funding Agreements review and implemented boundary improvements at Rosemead Park. This latter work had diverted resources, and a planned survey and consultation had been placed on hold.
- 18.9.2. Members discussed the importance of consultation and there was a strong view that even a scaled-back approach, such as gathering feedback at the Town Show, would be valuable. Whilst it was acknowledged that major improvements were unlikely in the current financial year, the Town Show was also seen as an opportunity to gauge community capacity for volunteering and using the park for other activities. It was therefore agreed that a scaled-back questionnaire be used at the Town Show.
- 18.9.3. It was also noted that ongoing contract reviews and continued liaison with stakeholders were providing valuable insights that could positively shape future plans for the park. It was acknowledged that the Section 106 funding allocated to Rosemead remained available, with specific provision for play equipment, and that additional funding was available through the Boklok development Section 106 agreement to support wider improvements that align with the Town Council's objectives. Members therefore agreed it would be prudent to take the time to undertake a thorough review of requirements.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. The Business Plan Action Plan be updated to reflect the change in the timing for delivery of further improvements at Rosemead Park.
2. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

19. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7.49pm.

Chair